

A place is a place is a place:
Subjective perceptions and liminoid
practices of interstitial spaces.

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Networking Conference of the
IRTGs «Diversity» and «Entre Espacios»
(12 June 2015)

introduction

“Symbol of beauty.
Thimble* of everything.
Cunning clover thimble.
Cunning of everything.
Cunning of thimble.
Cunning cunning.
Place in pets.
Night town.
Night town a glass.
Color mahogany.
Color mahogany center.
Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose”

Gertrud Stein, «Sacred Emily»
(1913), in: Geography and Plays.
Boston (Mass.): The Four Seas
Company, 1922, p. 178-188

* thimble = Fingerhut, dedal

outline

1. co-spatiality
2. interstice
3. limen (threshold) & liminoid experiences
4. alternative conceptualizations of in-between spaces

Research context:

IDENT2 - Strategies of Regionalisation: Constructing Identity
Across Borders

Christian Wille, Rachel Reckinger, Sonja Kmec and Markus Hesse
(eds.): Spaces and Identities in Border Regions. Policies - Media -
Subjects. Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2015 (forthcoming)

preliminary remarks

Spatial turn

Place (lieu) -> space (espace)

- Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* Berkeley: UC Press, 1984 [French original 1980]

Places (lieux) & non-places (non-lieux)

- Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, London & New York: Verso, 1995 [French original 1992]

1. co-spatiality

Interspatiality

- interface
 - spatial scaling (emboîtement spatial)
 - co-spatiality
- Jacques Lévy / Michel Lussault (ed.), Dictionnaire de la géographie, Paris: Belin, 2003.

2. interstice

Contact zone, co-presence

- Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Kindle edition, London: Taylor & Francis eLibrary, 2007 [1st ed. 1992]

Third space

- Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London/New York: Routledge, 1994.

Hybridity

- Mikhail Bakhtin, *From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse*, in: Michael Holquist (ed.), *Four Essays by M. Bakhtin*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, [Russian original 1940]: Kindle Locations 794-1305, here 1039-1040

Interstitial (urban areas, communities)

- Frederick Thrasher, *The Gang*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927
- Francesco Cordasco / Rocco G. Galatioto, *Ethnic Displacement in the Interstitial Community: the East Harlem (New York City) Experience*, in: *The Journal of Negro Education* 40/1 (1971), 56-65.

Contact zone

- Albert Piette, *L'école de Chicago et la ville cosmopolite d'aujourd'hui: lecture et relectures critiques*, in: Albert Bastenier/ Felice Dassetto (eds.), *Immigrations et nouveaux pluralismes*, Bruxelles: De Boeck, 1990, 67-83

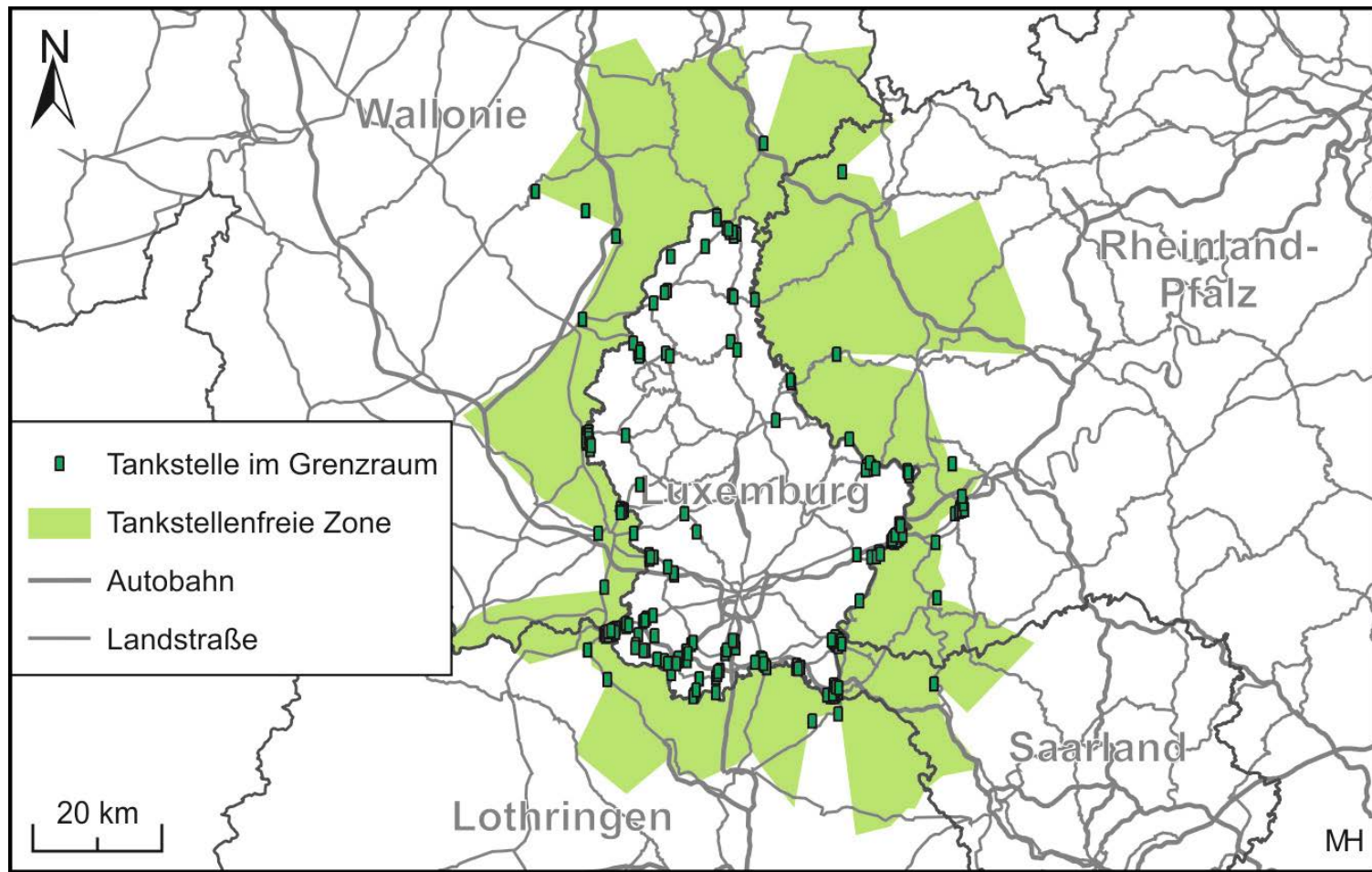


Fig. 1: Petrol stations as border markers.

- Daniel Ullrich, Tanktourismus, in: GR-Atlas, <http://gr-atlas.uni.lu/index.php/de/articles/tr1191/ta1196>, accessed 17.12.2013; map designed by Malte Helfer

“Each fuelling procedure is a mixture of pure routine and immersion into a very specific microcosm. [...] The subject perceives themselves as in an *in-between world*: for a brief moment, the visit to the petrol station has torn them out of their normal everyday routine. In this ‘no man’s land’, the obligations and the rules of everyday life are less palpable, the subjects are more open towards the unknown and new products, and they will follow impulsive feelings and wishes more spontaneously. [...]. This alien/unfamiliar *in-between world* also generates fears and perhaps even a diffuse sense of threat and insecurity”

- Rheingold Institut, Frauen fühlen sich an Tankstellen unwohl – Aral-Mobilitätsstudie, http://www.rheingold-salon.de/veroeffentlichungen/artikel/Frauen_fuehlen_sich_a_n_Tankstellen_unwohl_-_Aral-Mobilitaetsstudie.html, accessed 17.12.2013 (my italics).

“They came there with a supermarket trolley and they were already a little drunk [laughter]. [...] I think they wanted to wash the cars, but it wasn’t very clever, because [loud laughter], just next to them, there was the petrol sta... – er – the automatic carwash station [...] they must have stayed two, three hours before they left for – I don’t know – Clausen, well, and confront the bride with further dares. They made – er – a lot of noise. Me, I passed by twice with my dog and you could hear them in the entire village [laughter] laughing like crazy. That was really funny”

- Female interview partner, 30 y., Portuguese-Luxembourgish, living in Luxembourg

3. threshold

"The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between things* does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle."

- Deleuze, Gilles/Guattari, Felix, A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 25 [French original 1980]

liminal

- Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960 [French original 1909]

liminoid

- Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

Different experiences at the threshold

- a) Mildly transformative, creative actions (liminoid)
- b) Potentially radical actions, only envisaged
- c) Wavering, paralysis

Different experiences at the threshold

a) “Attention ladies and gentlemen! Three packs of cigarettes for the price of five!”

➤ Aire de Wasserbillig Unpublished iPhone Video Filmed on 20.10.2012 by Agnès Prüm

b) “This is dreadful, because I really don't like it. [...] I don't want anybody else to fill up my car, I want to do this myself. [...] I really wanted to say ..., and I got very angry at myself because I didn't intervene. I really wanted to tell him ‘Here, take 5 or 10 € as a tip, but just leave me alone’ [laughs]. I did tell him ‘Please, leave it be,’ but he just did it and afterwards I was so very angry at myself, I should have struck his fingers and told him ‘Just go, I’ll do this myself’”

➤ Male interview partner, 29 y., German, living in Saarland

Different experiences at the threshold

c) “Once I’m there, it no longer bothers me, and actually, I rather like [petrol stations], it’s tidy, sometimes you can get rather nice chocolates, beautiful flower arrangements, and in general, the girls are nice ... In fact, I do not like going there, I keep telling myself, oh shit, I have to go and get fuel, but once I’m there, it does not bother me. It’s fast, and rather comfortable, well thought-through, well laid out”

“Moreover, if we are not talking about petrol stations in Luxembourg, when you drive down to the south, the only ray of hope [sunbeam] of the journey [small ironic laughter], is to stop at petrol stations. During a long journey, I love it! But the stations are different from the ones you find here. There, you can see people, lorry drivers from different countries, you see people who take a sort of shower in the toilets, well, I think it's very lively. [...] And then, you see people, and there are people who make you laugh, some of them are fighting, and it’s a very, very lively environment!” (ibid.).

➤ Female interview partner, 33 years, French, living in Lorraine

4. alternative conceptualizations

Overlaps, fuzzy sets

- Vilém Flusser, Zwiegespräche. Interviews 1967-1991, Göttingen: European Photography, 1996.
- Vilém Flusser, Kommunikologie weiter denken. Die Bochumer Vorlesungen, Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2009.

Transdifference

- Britta Kalscheuer, Die raum-zeitliche Ordnung des Transdifferenten, in: Lars Allolio-Näcke/Britta Kalscheuer/Arne Manzeschke (eds.), Differenzen anders denken. Bausteine zu einer Kulturtheorie der Transdifferenz, Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2005, 68-85.
- Klaus Lösch, Begriff und Phänomen der Transdifferenz: Zur Infragestellung binärer Differenzkonstrukte, in: Lars Allolio-Näcke/Britta Kalscheuer/Arne Manzeschke (eds.), Differenzen anders denken. Bausteine zu einer Kulturtheorie der Transdifferenz, Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2005, 26-49.